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NIO #__730_-74

12 April 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable James R. Schlesinger
                 Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT   : Outcomes of Hypothetical US-Soviet
                 Naval Engagements During the 1973
                 Middle East Crisis

    1. The attached study was prepared in response to your request
for an assessment of the probable outcomes of a US-Soviet naval bat-
tle during the recent Middle East crisis, had such a battle occurred.

    2. My colleagues' analysis is perforce hypothetical. It is
constrained by certain clearly stated assumptions, e.g., that any
such engagement would have remained localized, would have stayed non-
nuclear, and would not have been part of or allowed to precipitate a
wider general war. Such assumptions are necessary to create a man-
ageable analytical problem, since without them it would have been
virtually impossible to consider a Mediterranean naval conflict in
the abstract and not as but one component of a much larger and more
complex struggle, with many of the larger war's aspects having a
material bearing on that Mediterranean naval struggle's outcome.
These conceptual constraints, though necessary to keep the problem
manageable, are patently arbitrary and, in my opinion, quite artifi-
cial. I find it difficult to envisage even three days of intense
US-USSR naval combat (even non-nuclear combat) in the Mediterranean
not being part of a general war or precipitating a general war, hence
I find it hard to envisage any extensive set-to between the US Sixth
Fleet and the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron as being a kind of float-
ing Fashoda (remembering that the impact and consequences of Fashoda
would have been quite different had any shots actually been fired).

    3. The attached study (per your wishes) was prepared quietly
within the Agency and not coordinated with anyone else. Indeed, to
my knowledge, no one outside the Agency is aware that we have done it.
It is for your eyes alone and we plan no further distribution.

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                        George A. Carver, Jr.
                 Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

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Attachment

O/D/DCI/NIO:GACarver/1v
  Distribution:
    Orig - Addressee
       1 - DCI
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